

DIAPER BAG WITH A POCKETBOOK

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This application claims priority of U.S. provisional application Serial Number 60/244,324, filed October 31, 2000, the contents of which are fully incorporated herein by reference.

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a personal handbag for carrying diapers and other baby care items. More specifically, the present invention relates to a convenient-to-carry and then use diaper and related accessories bag incorporating pocketbook features wherein the diaper bag has a plurality of convenient storage compartments for baby care items such as bottles, baby wipes, etc. One aspect of the present device is that, while supported on one arm, i.e., on the shoulder, it can be easily and quickly opened with the wearer's same arm on which it is supported, keeping the other hand and arm entirely free. This can be important when it is necessary to hold onto a child.

Background of the Invention

Going out with a baby necessitates taking and carrying a lot of baby care items such as diapers, bottles, wipes, lotions, etc. Existing and available diaper bags have been designed to help parents and other child care providers organize and carry all of the baby necessities. Different diaper bag designs have been proposed over the years. For example, a traditional

diaper bag has a rectangular shape with a zipper closure at the top and contains several compartments for diapers and other baby items. Pouches and/or compartments are also provided in the traditional diaper bags for the storage of keys, money, credit cards, etc. so that the diaper bag functions both as an integral baby product carrier and a pocketbook. However, all of the currently available designs require the parent or the care-giver who might be carrying the child or holding his or her hand to first release the child's hand or put the baby down onto the floor or a changing table (in the case of a small infant) and then open the bag and take out the necessary items. This had to be done because two hands have been required to open up the bag. In contrast, the present invention allows a parent or care-giver to carry the device over the shoulder and open the diaper bag with the same arm on which the bag is secured, to remove any item. Therefore, a childcare provider using the presently proposed diaper bag can hold the baby with one hand and open the bag and remove an item with the other. Two hands are not needed to gain access to the contents of the bag.

Summary of the Invention

It is an object of the present invention to provide a diaper bag for carrying baby care items which can be easily and quickly opened with one hand.

It is another object of the present invention to allow an individual carrying the diaper bag over his/her shoulder to open and close the bag and remove desired items without removing the bag from the shoulder and without the use of two hands.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a diaper bag which has a plurality of convenient compartments for different baby care necessities.

It is an object of the invention to provide a diaper bag which is worn on one shoulder which can be accessed by the same arm over which it is worn, freeing the other hand and arm for other usages (child tending).

Further objects and/or advantages of the invention will become apparent in conjunction with the disclosure herein.

To accomplish the above objects, the present invention provides a diaper bag comprising preferably, a pair of handles allowing the bag to be worn over one shoulder. The side edges of the diaper bag are secured together by hook and loop securing means. Grasping one handle with the hand, while leaving the other handle supported on the shoulder, allows the loops to be disengaged from the hooks on the sides of the bag and provides one-handed opening and access to the diaper bag. This design enables a user to pull down one panel of the bag while the other panel remains in place with the handle over the carrier's shoulder to gain access to the interior compartments containing various baby care items conveniently organized within these compartments. In accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention, one interior panel of the diaper bag has a bottle holding compartment and a small plastic pocket to hygienically store small size accessories such as a pacifier or medicine. The other inside panel of the diaper bag preferably comprises a clean diaper holding compartment and a "wipe" holding compartment. The wipe holding portion is preferably lined with plastic and has a slit so that a

user can pull wipes out, one at a time, without struggling with a traditional plastic container. The diaper bag, in accordance with the preferred embodiment, also features a series of compartments, like a pocketbook, located on the outside, preferably on the back panel of the diaper bag. One outside panel of the pocketbook portion preferably has a flap closure or alternatively may have a zipper closure and it is preferably used to store the baby care provider's personal belongings, car keys, wallet, etc. A separate holding area or pouch may be provided between the outside flap-closed pocketbook portion and the handle-supporting outside of the front panel. This additional pouch may be used to store a changing pad for a baby, possibly provided with the present invention. Another large outer compartment, which may be closed by a zipper, may also be provided on the outside or front of the diaper bag for storage of extra baby's outfits, soiled diapers or any other large items desirably carried with the baby.

Brief Description of the Drawings

An understanding of the invention can be gained from the following description of the preferred embodiments when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a front view of the diaper bag in accordance with the present invention showing a large storage compartment attached to the outside or front panel of the two-handled, over the shoulder, diaper bag;

Figure 2 is a view of the opened diaper bag in accordance with the present invention showing several compartments for a baby bottle, diapers, wipes and other small baby care items, for example, pacifiers;

Figure 3 is a rear view of the diaper bag in accordance with the present invention, showing a pocketbook section attached or secured to the outside rear panel of the diaper bag; and

Figure 4 is a perspective view of the rear side of the diaper bag showing an additional compartment, located between the personal care portion or pocketbook shown in Fig. 3 and the rear outside panel of the bag, containing a baby changing pad.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment and the Drawings

As shown in Fig. 1, a diaper bag is generally designated by a reference number 10. It is illustrated and described in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention. In its preferred embodiment, the diaper bag 10 comprises a front panel 30 and a rear panel 40 (shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3). A hinged edge 41 may connect the two panels and allow the panels to rotate, open and close relative to each other. Alternatively, the two panels may be joined along their bottoms by a separate connecting piece (not shown). Alternatively, a single folded-in-half, double-length panel may be used in lieu of two panels hinged or connected together. A large compartment 12 is preferably provided at the front or outside of the panel 30 of the diaper bag 10, as shown in Fig. 1. This compartment 12 may be used for storage of additional baby outfits, soiled diapers and any other large items, for example a changing pad. A horizontally extending zipper 26 travels across the top of the large compartment 12 and attaches the extra layer of compartment 12 to the outside of the front panel 30 of the diaper bag to facilitate selective opening and closing of the large compartment 12. When the large compartment 12 of the diaper bag 10 is first opened by the carrier, and items placed inside the large compartment 12, they will

be prevented from falling out by closure of the zipper 26. The outside large compartment 12 can be segmented for easy storage and organization of a variety of items.

In the preferred embodiment, the diaper bag 10 has two large handles 16, which are, preferably, made wide and thick to ease the pressure on the body as it is intended for the bag to be not only hand carried but, preferably, carried over a shoulder. One handle is attached to the top and outside of the front panel 30 and the other is secured to the top and outside of rear panel 40. Alternatively, the diaper bag 10 may be constructed with only a single over-the-shoulder handle attached to only one of the panels. In this embodiment, a means to grip the panel not provided with an over-the-shoulder handle must be provided to facilitate separation of the panels.

As shown in Fig. 2, in its preferred embodiment, the diaper bag 10 further comprises a pair of opposed side or panel edge closures 14. Each side closure 14 comprises a conventional strip of "hook and loop" fastener, i.e., "Velcro", as the preferred fastening mechanism. In the preferred embodiment, shown in Fig.2, the diaper bag has two opposed and parallel fastening strips attached to the inside of panels 30 and 40 to secure the side edges of the bag 10. So, for example, both sides of panel 30 have hooks extending from top edge 45 to edge 41 to mate with and close upon the loops of both sides of panel 40 extending from edge 41 to bottom edge 43.

To open the diaper bag 10, a user will pull down one of the handles 16 while holding and supporting the bag (preferably on the shoulder) by the other handle. By pulling one handle down with the hand of the shoulder upon which the bag is supported, against the upward supporting force of the shoulder, the user will separate the fastener strips (hooks from loops) and expose the

inside compartments of the diaper bag, as shown in Fig. 2, all while having the bag still suspended from the shoulder. Therefore, in accordance with the present invention, the design of the side closures 14 in combination with an over-the-shoulder handle for upward support, allows the user to open and close the diaper bag using only one hand (on the arm over which the bag is supported). Upward resistance against the downward pulling action to open the bag is provided by the shoulder supporting one of the bag's handles. The other hand and arm is thus free to hold the child. Alternatively, in the embodiment where the diaper bag 10 is constructed with only one over-the-shoulder handle, the care giver may pull down on a gripping means of the panel of the bag not provided with a handle, while allowing the over-the-shoulder handle and panel to remain supported on the shoulder. Thus one can still open the bag easily using one hand. In another alternative embodiment, a continuous zipper may run along the two side edges of the panels and between the top and bottom edges 43 and 45.

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The diaper bag 10 preferably has a number of various inside compartments for baby care items. As shown in Fig. 2, the open diaper bag preferably has a bottle holding compartment 20, a small compartment 18 for small baby items, a fresh diaper compartment 22, and a wipe compartment 24. The compartment 18 is preferably sized to accommodate any of the currently available baby accessories, such as pacifiers, medicine, snacks, etc. The compartment 20 is used to contain one baby bottle and is suitable to fit any of the currently available baby bottles. The bottle holding compartment 20 and the small compartment 18 are preferably closable by flaps 36 and 38 having mating hook and loop fastening. The small compartment 20 may be lined with plastic. The diaper compartment 22 (on the inside of the panel 40) preferably has an inside closure mechanism 28, which may also be made of hook and loop mating materials. In the preferred embodiment, the wipe containing compartment 24 is lined with plastic material and has

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a slit 32 with a closing mechanism 34. Slit 32 allows a parent to remove wipes easily from the compartment, a single wipe at a time. Any conventionally known fastener may be used on the closing mechanism 34, for example, a button, a snap closure, or hook and mating loop strips.

Turning attention to Fig. 3, a pocketbook section 42, formed of a layer of material, is preferably secured and located on the outside of the rear panel 40, and is secured to the rear panel along three of its sides. It is preferable to secure the pocketbook section 42 to the rear panel 40 of the diaper bag, such that when the care giver extends his or her arm through the handle the rear panel 40 rests closer to the care giver's side than the front panel, because, when the diaper bag is opened by a carrier, the pocketbook will remain in substantially an upright position and its contents will not fall out. The pocketbook 42 is closed by a fold over flap 44, which may be secured to the front of the pocketbook portion using any conventionally known closing mechanism such as described above. The pocketbook 42 may be used to store the care giver's personal belongings such as a wallet, car keys, etc. Because the pocketbook is located on the outside of the diaper bag (although worn with the pocketbook closer to the body), it is easier for a bag carrier to find his or her personal belongings without opening the central section of the diaper bag. The pocketbook 42 may be equipped with a zipper closing.

As shown in Fig. 4, an additional compartment or pouch 46 may be provided between the layer of material forming the pocketbook 42 and the outside of the handle-supporting rear panel 40. In the preferred embodiment, the additional compartment 46 is used to store a changing pad 48. The changing pad 48 may be easily removed from the compartment 46 and unfolded using only one free hand. Access to the additional compartment or pouch 46 may be provided by using any conventionally known closing and opening mechanism such as described above.

Having described this invention with regard to specific embodiments, it is to be understood that the description is not meant as a limitation since further variations or modifications may be apparent or may suggest themselves to those skilled in the art. It is intended that the present application cover such variations and modifications.

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